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CHEAP REPOSITORY.

THE  
COTTAGE COOK,

OR,

Mrs JONES'S Cheap Dishes;

Shewing the Way to do much good with little Money.



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## COTTAGE COOK.

MRS. JONES was a great merchant's lady. She was liberal to the poor, but as she was too much taken up with the world, she did not spare so much of her time and thoughts about doing good as she ought, so that her money was often ill bestowed. In the late troubles, Mr. Jones, who had lived in a grand manner, failed, and he took his misfortunes so much to heart that he fell sick and died. Mrs. Jones retired on a very narrow income to the small village of Weston, where she seldom went out except to church. Though a pious woman she was too apt to indulge her sorrow; and though she did not neglect to read and pray, yet she gave up a great part of her time to melancholy thoughts, and grew quite inactive. She well knew how sinful it would be for her to seek a cure for her grief in worldly pleasures, which is a way many people take under afflictions, but she was not aware how wrong it was to weep away that time which might have been better spent in drying the tears of others.

It was happy for her that Mr. Simpson, the vicar of Weston, was a pious man. One Sunday he happened to preach on the good Samaritan. It was a charity Sermon, and there was a collection at the door. He called on Mrs. Jones after church, and found her in tears. She told him she had been



much moved by his discourse, and she wept because she had so little to give to the plate; for though she felt very keenly for the poor in these dear times, yet she could not assist them. "Indeed Sir," added she "I never so much regretted the loss of my fortune, as this afternoon, when you bade us go *and do likewise*." "You do not," replied Mr. Simpson "enter into the spirit of our Saviour's parable, if you think you cannot go *and do likewise* without being rich. In the case of the Samaritan you may observe, that charity was afforded more by kindness, and care, and medicine, than by money. You, Madam, were as much concerned in my Sermon as Sir John with his great estate; and, to speak plainly, I have been sometimes surprized that you should not put yourself in the way of being more useful."

"Sir," said Mrs. Jones "I am grown shy of the poor since I have nothing to give them." "Nothing Madam," replied the Clergyman, "do you call your time, your talents, your kind offices, nothing? I will venture to say that you might do more good than the richest man in the parish could do by merely giving his money. Instead of sitting here, brooding over your misfortunes, which are past remedy, bestir yourself to find out ways of doing much good with little money; or even without any money at all. You have lately studied economy for yourself. Instruct your poor neighbours in it. They want it almost as much as they want money. You have influence with the few rich persons in the parish. Exert that influence. Betty, my housekeeper, shall assist you in any thing in which she can be useful. Try this for one year

and if you then tell me that you should have better shewn your love to God and man, and been a happier woman had you continued gloomy and inactive, I shall be much surprized."

The Sermon and this discourse made so deep an impression on Mrs. Jones, that she formed a new plan of life, and set about it at once, as every body does who is in earnest. Her chief aim was the happiness of her poor neighbours in the next world; but she was also very desirous to promote their present comfort. The plans she pursued with a view to the latter object shall be explained in this little book. Mrs. Jones was much respected by all the rich persons in Weston who had known her in her prosperity. Sir John was thoughtless, lavish, and indolent. The Squire was over-frugal, but active, sober, and not ill-natured. Sir John loved pleasure, the Squire loved money. Sir John was one of those popular sort of people who get much praise and yet do little good; who subscribe with equal readiness to a cricket match or a charity school; who take it for granted that the poor are to be indulged with bell-ringing and bonfires, and to be made drunk at Christmas, this Sir John called being kind to them; but he thought it was folly to teach them, and madness to think of reforming them. He was, however, always ready to give his guinea; but I question whether he would have given up his hunting and his gaming to have cured every grievance in the land. On the other hand, the Squire would assist Mrs. Jones in any of her plans if it cost him nothing; so she shewed her good sense by never asking Sir John for advice, or the Squire for subscriptions, and by this prudence gained the full support of both.



Mrs. Jones resolved to spend two or three days in a week in getting acquainted with the state of the parish, and she took care never to walk out without a few little good books in her pocket to give away. She found that among the numerous wants she met with, no small share was owing to bad management or to imposition. She was struck with the small size of the loaves. Wheat was now not very dear, and she was sure a good deal of blame rested with the baker. She sent for a shilling loaf to the next great town where the mayor often sent to the bakers' shops to see that the bread was proper weight. She weighed her town loaf against her country loaf, and found the latter two pounds lighter than it ought to be. This was not the sort of grievance to carry to Sir John; but luckily the Squire was also a magistrate, and it was quite in his way. He told her he could remedy the evil if some one would lodge an information against the baker.

She dropt in on the blacksmith. He was at dinner. She enquired if his bread was good. "Aye good enough mistress, for you see 'tis as white as your cap, if we had but more of it. Here's a sixpenny loaf, you might take it for a penny roll! He then heartily cursed Crib the baker, and said, he ought to be hanged. Mrs. Jones now told him what she had done, how she had detected the fraud, and assured him the evil should be redressed on the morrow, provided he would appear and inform. "I inform!" said he with a shocking oath, "hang an informer! I scorn the office." "You are nice in the wrong place, friend," replied Mrs. Jones,

"for you do not scorn to abuse the baker, nor to be in a passion, nor to swear, though you scorn to redress a public injury, and to increase your children's bread. Let me tell you, there is nothing in which you ignorant people mistake more than in your notions about *informers*. Informing is a lawful way of obtaining redress, and though it is a mischievous and a hateful thing to go to a justice about every trifling matter, yet laying an information on important occasions, without malice or bitterness of any kind, is what no honest man ought to be ashamed of. The shame is to commit the offence, not to inform against it. I, for my part, should perhaps do right if I not only informed against Crib for making light bread, but against you for swearing at him." "Well but Madam," said the smith, a little softened, "don't you think it a sin and a shame to turn informer?" "So far from it when a man's motives are good," said Mrs. Jones, "that in such clear cases as the present I think it a duty and a virtue." If it is right that there should be laws it must be right that they should be put in execution; but how can this be, if people will not inform the magistrates when they see the laws broken? An informer by trade is commonly a knave; a rash, malicious, or passionate informer is a fire-brand, but honest and prudent informers are almost as useful members of society as the judges of the land. If you continue in your present mind on this subject, do not you think that you will be answerable for the crimes you might have prevented by informing, and be a sort of accomplice of the villains who commit them?"

"Well Madam," said the smith, "I now see plainly



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enough that there is no shame in turning informer  
when my cause is good." "And your motive  
right, always mind that," said Mrs. Jones. Next  
day the smith attended, Crib was fined in the usual  
penalty, his light bread was taken from him and  
given to the poor. The justices resolved hence-  
forward to inspect the bakers in their district; and  
all of them, except Crib, and such as Crib, were  
glad of it, for honesty never dreads a trial. Thus had  
Mrs. Jones the comfort of seeing how useful peo-  
ple may be without expence; for if she could have  
given the poor 50l. she would not have done them  
so great or so lasting a benefit, and the true light  
in which she had put the business of *informing* was  
of no small use.

There were two shops in the parish, but Mrs.  
Sparks at the Cross had not half so much custom  
as Wills at the Sugar Loaf, though she sold her  
goods a penny in a shilling cheaper, and all agreed  
that they were much better. Mrs. Jones asked Mrs.  
Sparks the reason. "Madam," said the shopkeeper,  
"Mr. Wills will give longer trust. Besides this, his  
wife keeps shop on a Sunday morning while I am  
at church." Mrs. Jones reminded Mr. Simpson  
to read the King's Proclamation against vice and  
immorality next Sunday at Church, and prevailed  
on the Squire to fine any one who should keep  
open shop on a Sunday. She also put the people  
in mind that a shopkeeper, who would sell on a  
Sunday, would be more likely to cheat them all  
the week, than one who went to Church.

She also laboured hard to convince them how  
much they would lessen their distress if they would  
contrive to deal with Mrs. Sparks for ready money,

rather than with Wills on long credit; those who listened to her found their circumstances far more comfortable at the year's end, while the rest, tempted, like some of their betters, by the pleasure of putting off the evil day of payment, like them at last found themselves plunged in debt and distress. She took care to make a good use of such instances in her conversations with the poor, and, by perseverance, she at length brought them so much to her way of thinking, that Wills found it to be his interest to alter his plan, and sell his goods on as good terms and as short credit as Mrs. Sparks sold hers. This completed Mrs. Jones's success, and she had the satisfaction of having put a stop to three or four great evils in the parish of Weston, without spending a shilling in doing it.

Patty Smart and Jenny Rose were thought to be the two best managers in the parish. They both told Mrs. Jones that the poor would get the coarse pieces of meat cheaper, if the gentles folks did not buy them for soups and gravy. Mrs. Jones thought there was reason in this. So away she went to Sir John, the 'Squire, the Surgeon, the Attorney, and the Steward, the only persons in the parish who could afford to buy costly things. She told them that if they would all be so good as to buy only prime pieces, which they could very well afford, the coarse and cheap joints would come more within the reach of the poor. Most of the gentry readily consented. Sir John cared not what his meat cost him, but told Mrs. Jones in his gay way, that he would eat any thing, or give any thing, so that she would not tease him with long stories about the poor. The 'Squire said, he should prefer vegetable soups, because they were cheaper, and the



Doctor, because they were wholesomer. The Steward chose to imitate the Squire; and the Attorney found it would be quite ungentle to stand out. So gravy soups became very unfashionable in the parish of Weston; and I am sure if rich people did but think a little on this subject, they would be as unfashionable in many other places.

When wheat grew cheaper Mrs. Jones was earnest with the poor women to bake large brown loaves at home, instead of buying small white ones at the shop. Mrs. Betty had told her, that baking at home would be one step towards restoring the good old management. Only Betty Smart and Jenny Rose baked at home in the whole parish, and who lived so well as they did? Yet the general objection seemed reasonable. They could not bake without yeast, which often could not be had, as no one brewed but the great folks and the public houses. Mrs. Jones found, however, that Patty and Jenny contrived to brew as well as to bake. She sent for these women, knowing that from them she should get truth and reason. "How comes it," said she to them, "that you two are the only poor women in the parish who can afford to brew a small cask of beer? Your husbands have not better wages than other men." "True Madam," said Patty, "but they never set foot in a public house. I will tell you the truth. When I first married, our John went to the Checquers every night, and I had my tea and fresh butter twice a-day at home. This sloop, which consumed a deal of sugar, began to *rake* my stomach sadly, as I had neither meat nor milk; at last, (I am ashamed to own it) I began to take a drop of gin to quiet the pain, till in time I looked for my gin as regularly as

for my tea. At last the gin, the ale-house, and the tea, began to make us both sick and poor. I had like to have died with my first child. Parson Simpson then talked so finely to us that we resolved, by the grace of God, to turn over a new leaf, and I promised John if he would give up the Checquers, I would break the gin bottle, and never drink tea in the afternoon, except on Sundays when he was at home with me. We have kept our word, and both our eating and drinking, our health and our consciences are the better for it. Though meat is sadly dear we can buy two pounds of fresh meat for less than one pound of fresh butter, and it gives five times the nourishment. And dear as malt is, I contrive to keep a drop of drink in the house for John, and John will make me drink half a pint with him every evening, and a pint a day when I am a nurse."

As one good deed as well as one bad one brings on another, this conversation set Mrs. Jones on enquiring why so many ale-houses were allowed. She did not chuse to talk to Sir John on this subject, who would only have said "let them enjoy themselves poor fellows; if they get drunk now and then, they work hard." But those who have this false good-nature forget, that while the man is *enjoying himself*, as it is called, his wife and children are ragged and starving. True christian good-nature never indulges one at the cost of many, but is kind to all. The Squire, who was a friend to order, took up the matter. He consulted Mr. Simpson. "The Lion" said he "is necessary. It stands by the road side: travellers must have a resting place. As to the Checquers and the Bell they do no good but much harm," Mr. Simpson had before



made many attempts to get the Checquers put down; but unluckily it was Sir John's own house, and kept by his late butler. Not that Sir John valued the rent, but he had a false kindness which made him support the cause of an old servant, though he knew he kept a disorderly house. The Squire, however, now took away the licence from the Lion. And a fray happening soon after at the Checquers (which was near the church) in time of divine service, Sir John was obliged to suffer the house to be put down as a nuisance. You would not believe how many poor families were able to brew a little gask when the temptations of those ale-houses were taken out of their way. Mrs. Jones in her evening walks had the pleasure to see many an honest man drinking his wholesome cup of beer by his own fire side, his rosy children playing about his knees, his clean chearful wife hanging her youngest baby to sleep, rocking the cradle with her foot, while with her hands she was making a dumpling for her kind husband's supper. Some few, I am sorry to say, though I don't chuse to name names, still preferred getting drunk once a week at the Lion, and drinking water at other times.

The good women being now supplied with yeast from each other's brewings, would have baked, but two difficulties still remained. Many of them had no ovens, for since the new bad management had crept in, many cottages have been built without this convenience. Fuel also was scarce at Weston. Mrs. Jones advised the building a large parish oven. To this oven, at a certain hour, three times a week, the elder children carried the loaves which their mothers had made at home, and paid a halfpenny,

or a penny, according to their size, for the baking.

Mrs. Jones found that no poor women in Weston could buy a little milk, as the farmers' wives did not care to rob their dairies. This was a great distress, especially when the children were sick. So Mrs. Jones advised Mrs. Sparks at the Cross to keep a couple of cows, and sell out the milk by halfpennyworths. She did so, and found, that though this plan gave her some additional trouble, she got full as much by it as if she had made cheese and butter. She also sold rice at a cheap rate, so that with the help of the milk and the publick oven, a fine rice pudding was to be had for a trifle.

The girls' school in the parish was fallen into neglect, for though many would be subscribers, yet no one would look after it. I wish this was the case at Weston only. It was not in Mr. Simpson's way to see if girls were taught to work. This is ladies' business. Mrs. Jones consulted her counsellor Mrs. Betty, and they went every Friday to the school, where they invited mothers as well as daughters to come, and learn to cut out to the best advantage. Mrs. Jones had not been bred to these things, but by means of Mrs. Cooper's excellent cutting out book, she soon became mistress of the whole art. She not only had the girls taught to make and mend, but to wash and iron too.\* She also allowed the mother, or eldest daughter of every family, to come once a week, and learn how to dress *one cheap dish*. One Friday, which was cooking day, who

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\* How Mrs. Jones managed her Sunday schools, and also her method of religious instruction on week days, may be shown hereafter,



should pass by but the Squire, with his gun and his dogs. He looked into the school for the first time. "Well, madam," said he, "what good are you doing here? What are your girls learning and earning? Where are your manufactures? Where is your spinning and your carding?" "Sir," said she, "this is a small parish, and you know ours is not a manufacturing country; so that when these girls are women, they will not be much employed in spinning. However, we teach them a little of it, and more of knitting, that they may be able to get up a small piece of household-linen once a year, and provide the family with stockings, by employing the odds and ends of their time in these ways. But there is a manufacture which I am carrying on, and I know of none within my own reach which is so valuable." "What can that be?" said the Squire. "TO MAKE GOOD WIVES FOR WORKING MEN." Said she. "Is not mine an excellent staple commodity? I am teaching these girls the art of industry and good management. It is little encouragement to an honest man to work hard all the week, if his wages are wasted by a glutton at home." "What have you got on the fire, madam?" said the Squire, "for your pot really smells as savoury, as if Sir John's French Cook had filled it." "Sir," replied Mrs. Jones, "I have lately got acquainted with Mrs. White, who has given us an account of her cheap dishes, and wise cookery, in one of the Cheap Repository little books. Mrs. Betty and I have made all her dishes, and very good they are, and we have got several others of our own. Every Friday we come here and dress one. These good women see how it is done, and learn to dress it at their own houses."

make home part for my own dinner, and what is left I give to each in turn. I hope I have opened their eyes on a sad mistake they had got into, *that we think any thing is good enough for the poor.*"

"Pray, Mrs. Betty," said the Squire, "oblige me with a basin of your soup." The Squire found it so good after his walk, that he was almost sorry he had promised to buy no more legs of beef, and declared again that not one sheep's head should ever go to his kennel again. He begged his cook might have the receipt, and Mrs. Jones wrote it out for her. She has also been so obliging as to favour me with a copy of all her receipts. And as I hate all monopoly, and see no reason why such cheap, nourishing, and savoury dishes should be confined to the parish of Weston, I print them, that all other parishes may have the same advantage. Not only the poor, but all persons with small incomes may be glad of them. "Well, madam," said Mr. Simpson, who came in soon after, "which is best, to sit down and cry over our misfortunes, or to bestir ourselves to do our duty to the world?" "Sir," replied Mrs. Jones, "I thank you for the useful lesson you have given me. You have taught me that our time and talents are to be employed with zeal in God's service, if we wish for his favour here or hereafter, and that one great employment of them, which he requires, is the promotion of the present, and much more, the future happiness of all around us. You have taught me that much good may be done with little money, and that the heart, the head, and the hands are of some use, as well as the purse."

May all who read this account of Mrs. Jones, go and do likewise!



RECEIPT I.

Two pounds of beef, four onions, ten turnips, half a pound of rice, a large handful of parsley, thyme, and savoury; some pepper and salt; eight quarts of water. Cut the beef in slices, and after it is boiled some time, cut it still smaller. The whole should boil gently about two hours, on a slow fire. If fuel be scarce, it may be stewed all night in an oven, and warmed up next day. You may add oatmeal and potatoes.

RECEIPT II.

Take half a pound of beef, mutton, or pork, cut it into small pieces; half a pint of pease, four sliced turnips, six potatoes cut very small, two onions; put to them seven pints of water. Let the whole boil gently over a very slow fire two hours and a half. Then thicken it with a quarter of a pound of oatmeal. After the thickening is put in, boil it a quarter of an hour, stirring it all the time: then season it with salt and pepper.

RECEIPT III.

Take two pounds of salt beef, or pork, cut it into very small bits, and put it into a pot with six quarts of water, letting it boil on a slow fire for three quarters of an hour; then put a few carrots, parsnips, or turnips, all cut small; or a few potatoes sliced; a cabbage, and a couple of cresses. Thicken the whole with a pint of oatmeal. All these to be well seasoned with salt and pepper.

## A N O T H E R.

Put three pickled herrings into a stone jar, fill it with sliced potatoes and a little water, and bake it till it is done.

The following soups Mrs. Sparks sold every Saturday in small quantities, a pint of the soup with a bit of the meat warmed upon Sunday made a dinner for a grown person.

An ox cheek, two pecks of potatoes, a quarter of a peck of onions, one ounce of pepper, half a pound of salt, boiled altogether in ninety pints of water till reduced to sixty, any garden stuff may be thrown in.

## F R I E N D L Y H I N T S.

The difference between eating bread new and stale, is one loaf in five.

If you turn your meat into broth it will go much farther than if you roast or bake it.

If you have a garden, make the most of it. A bit of leek or an onion makes all dishes flavoury at small expence.

If the money spent on fresh butter were spent on meat, poor families would be much better fed than they are.

If the money spent on tea were spent on home-brewed beer, the wife would be better fed, the husband better pleased, and both would be healthier.

Keep a little Scotch barley, rice, dry pease, and oatmeal in the house. They are all cheap and don't spoil. Keep also pepper and ginger.

Pay your debts, serve God, love your neighbour.

T H E E N D.



